AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in this Application.

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-28 (Cancelled).

Claim 29 (Withdrawn): A system wherein a user places an order for at least one provider and a degree of matching between each order-provider pairing is computed, the system comprising:

a data storage device to receive and store user information from at least one user, the user information including provider information that specifies provider criteria and order information that specifies order criteria for that particular order;

at least one virtual provider that is created by pairing provider information of a particular provider with order information of a particular order to create an informational pair;

a knowledge base which is stored in a data storage device which may be said data storage device, which is separate from the user information and separate from program code, and which contains information on which to base requests for information by the system to obtain the user information; and

an iterative scoring system that compares the provider information of a particular provider and the order information of a particular order within each respective informational pair, that determines a score reflecting a degree of matching for each respective informational pair, and that receives additional information including user information for iterative rescoring with or without requesting said additional information.

Claim 30 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, wherein the score is computed from a predetermined formula which includes at least one of user-specified criteria, user-specified weighting factors, and user-specified relative importance of respective criteria.

Claim 31 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, wherein the iterative scoring system determines scores based in part on degree of clustering of keywords in information provided.

Claim 32 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 31, wherein the degree of clustering of keywords in information provided is at least one of (a) information provided by at least one of the user, the at least one provider or a third party and (b) information contained in at least one of an application, a biography, and a resume submitted by the at least one provider.

Claim 33 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, wherein the iterative scoring system considers the degree of matching through multiple steps including receiving and inputting user information and optionally requesting the user information.

Claim 34 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 33, wherein the system further comprises (a) a management system that tracks each virtual provider through the multiple steps and (b) a sequencing system that specifies contents of each step of the multiple steps.

Claim 35 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 33, further comprising a timer that allocates a pre-determined time to complete at least one of the multiple steps.

Claim 36 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 35, wherein the system sends an alarm indicating that a predetermined time period has lapsed without requisite action.

Claim 37 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 36, wherein the alarm is sent to at least one individual recipient selected from the group consisting of user, the provider, a third party, and an operator of the system, the alarm is classified as either a warning alarm or an urgent alarm, and the alarm is sent to the at least one individual recipient based on whether the respective at least one individual recipient has access to warning alarms or to urgent alarms.

Claim 38 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 33, wherein the contents of each step of the multiple steps at least includes instructions to at least one of (a) the user regarding the input of additional user information and (b) the provider regarding the input of additional provider information, and wherein the sequencing system provides default content of a step.

Claim 39 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 38, wherein the default content is modified by the user.

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Claim 40 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, further comprising a rescoring system that automatically corrects the scores based on correction factors.

Claim 41 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 40, wherein the correction factors are derived from at least one of interviewing the provider, objective testing of the provider, and reference checking of the provider's information.

Claim 42 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 40, further comprising a device to request information which is one of (a) an avatar which is an animated image generated automatically by the system or (b) a simulated interviewer.

Claim 43 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 42, further comprising a device to accept verbal input, and wherein information is provided as verbal input and the system converts the verbal input to digital form.

Claim 44 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, further comprising a device to request information which is one of (a) an avatar which is an animated image generated automatically by the system or (b) a simulated interviewer.

Claim 45 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, further comprising a device to accept verbal input, and wherein information is provided as verbal input and the system converts the verbal input to digital form.

Claim 46 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, further comprising a reporting system that at least one of (a) sends status messages to the user regarding the status of a particular order in the system, and (b) sends status messages to providers regarding the status of the virtual providers relating to respective providers in the system.

Claim 47 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, further comprising a billing system that bills the user based on at least one of (a) number of providers that have been matched with said user, (b) number of orders during a period of time from said user, and (c) the number of iterations.

Claim 48 (Cancelled).

Claim 49 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, wherein the requests for information result in the system obtaining at least one of the user information, the provider information, the order information, and refinements of the foregoing.

Claim 50 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, wherein the knowledge base contains at least two different categories of information including (a) basic information used by the system to construct initial questionnaires used to obtain input of initial user, order, and provider information; and (b) correction information used by the system to construct verification materials used for corrections when the system determines that verification of user-provided information is appropriate.

Claim 51 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 50, wherein the correction information includes rules by which verification materials including at least questions are selected for verification and correction of previously entered provider, order, and user information.

Claim 52 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 51, wherein the verification materials are constructed in a real time manner by the system question by question when the system determines that verification of user-provided information is appropriate.

Claim 53 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 52, wherein the verification materials include multiple-choice questions and a plurality of answers to each respective question.

Claim 54 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, wherein the requests for information comprise at least one of questionnaires, application forms, tests, interview scripts and other verification requests.

Claim 55 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, wherein the requests for information are organized in a plurality of levels so that the response to one or more requests for information in one level generates one or more requests for information in another level.

Claim 56 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 55, wherein the requests for information are organized into at least three levels.

Claim 57 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, wherein the system makes at least one request for information from at least one responder, receives at least one response from a respective responder, and determines which particular request for information was satisfied without the respective responder identifying themselves.

Claim 58 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 57, wherein the system includes a plurality of hidden codes to identify the respective responder.

Claim 59 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, further comprising a knowledge base system that updates the information contained in the knowledge base automatically so that the knowledge base is an adaptive knowledge base.

Claim 60 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 59, further comprising a reporting system that at least one of (a) sends status messages to the user regarding the status of a particular order in the system, and (b) sends status messages to providers regarding the status of the virtual providers relating to respective providers in the system, wherein the reporting system advises at least one of users and providers when the knowledge base is automatically updated, and wherein at least one of users and providers input additional information into the system in response to the advisories.

Claim 61 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, wherein the user is a prospective employer and the provider is one of a prospective employee or independent contractor.

Claim 62 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, wherein the user is a prospective patient and the provider is one of a prospective doctor or dentist.

Claim 63 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, wherein the user is a human shopper and the provider is a supplier of one of companionship, goods, or services.

Claim 64 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 29, wherein the degree of matching between each order-provider pairing is computed without elimination of any providers to obtain a best fit.

Claim 65 (Withdrawn): A system wherein a user places an order for at least one provider, and a degree of matching between each order-provider pairing is computed, the system comprising:

a data storage device to receive and store user information from at least one user, the user information including provider information that specifies provider criteria and order information that specifies order criteria for that particular order;

at least one virtual provider that is created by pairing provider information of a particular provider with order information of a particular order to create an informational pair;

a knowledge base which is stored in a data storage device which may be said data storage device, which is separate from the user information and separate from program code, and which contains information on which to base requests for information by the system to obtain the user information;

a scoring system that compares the provider information of a particular provider and the order information of a particular order within each respective informational pair, and that determines a score reflecting a degree of matching for each respective informational pair;

a management system that tracks each virtual provider of the at least one on virtual provider through a plurality of information gathering steps; and

a sequencing system that specifies contents of each step of the plurality of information gathering steps, the contents at least including instructions to at least one of (a) the user regarding the input of user information and (b) the provider regarding the input of provider information.

Claim 66 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the sequencing system provides default content of an information gathering step.

Claim 67 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 66, wherein the default content is modified by the user.

Claim 68 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the score is computed from a predetermined formula which includes at least one of user-specified criteria, user-specified weighting factors, and user-specified relative importance of respective criteria.

Claim 69 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the scoring system determines scores based in part on degree of clustering of keywords in information provided.

Claim 70 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 69, wherein the degree of clustering of keywords in information provided is at least one of (a) information provided by at least one of the user, the at least one provider, and a third party and (b) information contained in at least one of an application, a biography, and a resume submitted by the at least one provider.

Claim 71 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the scoring system considers the degree of matching through multiple steps including receiving and inputting user information and optionally requesting the user information.

Claim 72 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 71, further comprising a timer that allocates a pre-determined time to complete at least one of the information gathering steps.

Claim 73 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 71, wherein the system sends an alarm indicating that a predetermined time period has lapsed without requisite action.

Claim 74 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 73, wherein the alarm is sent to at least one individual recipient selected from the group consisting of the user, the provider, a third party, and an operator of the system, the alarm is classified as either a warning alarm or an urgent alarm, and the alarm is sent to the at least one individual recipient based on whether the respective at least one individual recipient has access to warning alarms or to urgent alarms.

Claim 75 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, further comprising a rescoring system that automatically corrects the scores based on correction factors.

Claim 76 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 75, wherein the correction factors are derived from at least one of interviewing the provider, objective testing of the provider, and reference checking of the provider's information.

Claim 77 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 75, further comprising a device to request information which is one of (a) an avatar which is an animated image generated automatically by the system or (b) a simulated interviewer.

Claim 78 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 77, further comprising a device to accept verbal input, and wherein information is provided as verbal input and the system converts the verbal input to digital form.

Claim 79 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, further comprising a device to request information which is one of (a) an avatar which is an animated image generated automatically by the system or (b) a simulated interviewer.

Claim 80 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 79, further comprising a device to accept verbal input, and wherein information is provided as verbal input and the system converts the verbal input to digital form.

Claim 81 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, further comprising a reporting system that at least (a) sends status messages to the user regarding the status of a particular order in the system, and (b) sends status messages to providers regarding the status of the virtual providers relating to respective providers in the system.

Claim 82 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, further comprising a billing system that bills the user based on at least one of (a) number of providers that have been matched with said user, (b) number of orders during a period of time from said user, and (c) the number of iterations.

Claim 83 (Cancelled).

Claim 84 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the requests for information result in the system obtaining at least one of the user information, the provider information, the order information, and refinements of the foregoing.

Claim 85 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the knowledge base contains at least two different categories of information including (a) basic information used by the system to construct initial questionnaires used to obtain input of initial user, order, and provider information; and (b) correction information used by the system to construct verification materials used for corrections when the system determines that verification of user-provided information is appropriate.

Claim 86 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 85, wherein the correction information includes rules by which verification materials including at least questions are selected for verification and correction of previously entered provider, order, and user information.

Claim 87 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 86, wherein the verification materials are constructed in a real time manner by the system question by question when the system determines that verification of user-provided information is appropriate.

Claim 88 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 87, wherein the verification materials include multiple-choice questions and a plurality of answers to each respective question.

Claim 89 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the requests for information comprise at least one of questionnaires, application forms, interview scripts and other verification requests.

Claim 90 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the requests for information are organized in a plurality of levels so that the response to one or more requests for information in one level generates one or more requests for information in another level.

Claim 91 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 90, wherein the requests for information are organized into at least three levels.

Claim 92 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the system makes at least one request for information from at least one responder, receives at least one response from respective responder, and determines which particular request for information was satisfied without the respective responder identifying themselves.

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Claim 93 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 92, wherein the system includes a plurality of hidden codes to identify respective responder.

Claim 94 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, further comprising a knowledge base system that updates the information contained in the knowledge base automatically so that the knowledge base is an adaptive knowledge base.

Claim 95 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 94, further comprising a reporting system that at least (a) sends status messages to the user regarding the status of a particular order in the system, and (b) sends status messages to providers regarding the status of the virtual providers relating to respective providers in the system, wherein the reporting system advises at least one of users and providers when the knowledge base is automatically updated, and wherein at least one of users or providers input additional information into the system in response to the advisories.

Claim 96 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the user is a prospective employer and the provider is one of a prospective employee or independent contractor.

Claim 97 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the user is a prospective patient and the provider is one of a prospective doctor or dentist.

Claim 98 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the user is a human shopper and the provider is a supplier of one of companionship, goods, or services.

Claim 99 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 65, wherein the degree of matching between each order-provider pairing is computed without elimination of any providers to obtain a best fit.

Claim 100 (Presently amended): A matching system wherein a user places at least one order for at least one provider and a degree of matching between each order-provider pairing is computed and ~~iteratively~~ recomputed using responses to a cascading series of requests for additional information generated by the matching system in a fully automated way so that subjective bias from humans <u>in</u> <u>generating the requests for additional information</u> is substantially eliminated and ~~confidence in~~ the degree of matching is improved <u>thereby,</u> the matching system comprising:

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input means for inputting program code and user information, order information, and provider information;

a data storage device to receive and store said program code and said user information, order information, and provider information;

a knowledge base which is stored in a data storage device which may be said data storage device, which is substantially separate from program code that references said knowledge base either directly or indirectly, and which contains facts and rules for iteratively convergent problem solving; ~~and~~

~~output means for reporting matching results to the user,~~

wherein the ~~matching system iteratively addresses problems~~ iteratively convergent problem solving includes instructions for iteratively computing the degree of matching, including instructions for performing steps comprised of:

(a) constructing representations of attributes of the user, the at least one order, and the at least one provider,

(b) matching representations of respective attributes of a particular order with representations of attributes of a particular provider, and

(c) computing an initial degree of matching between each order-provider pairing of representations of respective attributes,

(d) cyclically generating requests for additional information from at least one of the user, respective providers, and respective third parties as a cascading series of requests for additional information generated by the program code by referencing the knowledge base in a fully automated way, and cyclically receiving responses,

(e) ~~iteratively~~ reconstructing the representations of respective attributes of the user, the at least one order, and the at least one provider based on responses received, and

(f) ~~iteratively~~ recomputing the degree of matching between each order-provider pairing of reconstructed representations of respective attributes so that subjective bias from humans in generating the requests for additional information is substantially eliminated and ~~confidence in~~ the degree of matching is improved thereby; and

output means for reporting matching results to the user.

Claim 101 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, wherein the knowledge base is substantially separate from the user information, the order information, and the provider information,

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and wherein the data storage device for the knowledge base is separate from the data storage device which receives and stores the user information, the order information, and the provider information.

Claim 102 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, wherein said representations of attributes of at least one of the user, the at least one order, and the at least one provider share at least one of symbolism and vocabulary.

Claim 103 (Presently amended): A matching system wherein a user places at least one order for at least one provider and a degree of matching between each order-provider pairing is computed and ~~iteratively~~ recomputed using responses to a cascading series of requests for additional information generated by the matching system in a fully automated way so that subjective bias from humans <u>in</u> <u>generating the requests for additional information</u> is substantially eliminated and ~~confidence in~~ the degree of matching is improved <u>thereby</u>, the matching system comprising:

input means for inputting program code and user information, order information, and provider information;

a data storage device to receive and store said program code and said user information, order information, and provider information;

a knowledge base which is stored in a data storage device which may be said data storage device, which is substantially separate from program code that references said knowledge base either directly or indirectly, and which contains facts and rules for iteratively convergent problem solving; ~~and~~

~~output means for reporting matching results to the user,~~

wherein the ~~matching system iteratively addresses problems~~ <u>iteratively convergent problem</u> <u>solving includes instructions for iteratively computing the degree of</u> matching<u>, including instructions</u> <u>for performing steps</u> comprised of:

(a) constructing representations of attributes of the user, the at least one order, and the at least one provider,

(b) matching representations of respective attributes of a particular order with representations of attributes of a particular provider, and

(c) computing an initial degree of matching between each order-provider pairing of representations of respective attributes,

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(d) cyclically generating requests for additional information from at least one of the user, respective providers, and respective third parties as a cascading series of requests for additional information generated by the program code by referencing the knowledge base in a fully automated way, and cyclically receiving responses,

(e) ~~iteratively~~ reconstructing the representations of respective attributes of the user, the at least one order, and the at least one provider based on responses received, and

(f) ~~iteratively~~ recomputing the degree of matching between each order-provider pairing of reconstructed representations of respective attributes so that subjective bias from humans <u>in generating the requests for additional information</u> is substantially eliminated and ~~confidence in~~ the degree of matching is improved <u>thereby</u>, and

wherein the knowledge base contains a plurality of different categories of facts and rules for iteratively convergent problem solving including:

(a) basic facts and rules used by the matching system to create initial requests for information to construct said representations of attributes of the user, the at least one order, and the at least one provider; and

(b) additional facts and rules used by the matching system for misrepresentation detection by:

    (1) constructing verification materials comprising requests for information designed to measure actual abilities and character traits of respective ones of the at least one provider for verification of the representations of attributes thereof,

    (2) obtaining verification results, and

    (3) carrying out correction of the representations of attributes of respective ones of the at least <u>one</u> ~~the~~ provider in light of the verification results<u>; and</u>

<u>output means for reporting matching results to the user.</u>

Claim 104 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 103, wherein the facts and rules includes facts and rules by which questions are constructed for use in one of said initial requests for information and said verification materials.

Claim 105 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 104, wherein one of said initial requests for information and said verification materials are constructed in a real time manner by the matching system, and wherein answers to previous questions influence choice of subsequent questions.

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Claim 106 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 104, wherein said verification materials include verification tests comprised of questions and a plurality of answers to each respective question.

Claim 107 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, wherein the requests for information comprise at least one of questionnaires, application forms, interview scripts, third party reference check requests, and verification tests.

Claim 108 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, wherein said cascading series of requests for information are organized in a plurality of well defined steps so that a response to one or more requests for information in one step generates one or more requests for information in another step.

Claim 109 (Cancelled).

Claim 110 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, wherein the matching system makes at least one request for information from at least one entity, receives at least one response from a respective entity, and determines which particular request for information was satisfied without the respective entity identifying itself.

Claim 111 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 110, wherein the matching system includes a plurality of hidden codes to identify the respective entity who is responding.

Claim 112 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, further comprising a knowledge base system that updates the information contained in the knowledge base automatically so that the knowledge base is an adaptive knowledge base.

Claim 113 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 112, wherein the knowledge base is automatically updated to provide updates, and wherein the updates may be used as a basis for requesting additional information.

Claim 114 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim113, further comprising a reporting system that at least one of (a) sends status messages to the user regarding the status of a particular order in the system, and (b) sends status messages to respective ones of the at least one provider, wherein the reporting system advises at least one of the user and the at least one provider when the knowledge base is automatically updated, and wherein at least one of the user and the at least one provider input additional information into the system in response to the advisories.

Claim 115 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, further comprising a scoring system that compares the provider information and the order information of one said order-provider pairing, and that determines a score for said order-provider pairing based upon the initial degree of matching and the iteratively recomputed degree of matching between the provider information and the order information.

Claim 116 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 115, wherein the score is computed from a predetermined formula which includes at least one of user-specified criteria, user-specified weighting factors, and user-specified relative importance of said user specified criteria.

Claim 117 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 115, wherein the scoring system determines scores based at least in part on degree of clustering of keywords in information provided.

Claim 118 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 117, wherein the information provided is at least one of (a) user information, (b) order information, and (c) provider information, which information includes at least one of a job description, an application, a biography, and a resume.

Claim 119 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 115, wherein the scoring system considers the initial degree of matching and the iteratively recomputed degree of matching through multiple steps including receiving additional information and optionally requesting said additional information.

Claim 120 (Previously resently amended): The matching system of claim 115, further comprising a rescoring system that automatically corrects the scores based on correction factors.

Claim 121 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 120, wherein the correction factors are derived from at least one of interviewing the provider, objective testing of the provider, and reference checking of the provider information.

Claim 122 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 119, further comprising a management system that tracks each order-provider pairing through the multiple steps; and a sequencing system that specifies contents of each step of the multiple steps.

Claim 123 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 122, further comprising a timer that allocates a pre-determined time to complete at least one of the multiple steps.

Claim 124 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 123, wherein the matching system sends an alarm indicating that a predetermined time period has lapsed without requisite action.

Claim 125 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 124, wherein the alarm is sent to at least one individual recipient selected from the group consisting of the user, at least one of the at least one provider, a third party, and an operator of the system, wherein the alarm is classified as either a warning alarm or an urgent alarm, and wherein the alarm is sent to the at least one individual recipient based on whether the respective at least one individual recipient has been granted access to warning alarms or to urgent alarms.

Claim 126 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 122, wherein the contents of each step of the multiple steps at least includes instructions to at least one of (a) the user regarding the input of additional information including at least one of (1) user information and (2) order information and (b) respective ones of the at least one provider regarding the input of additional provider information, and wherein the sequencing system provides default content of a step.

Claim 127 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 126, wherein the default content is modified by the user.

Claim 128 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 121, further comprising a device to request information which is one of (a) an avatar which is an animated image generated automatically by the system or (b) a simulated interviewer.

Claim 129 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 121, further comprising a device to accept verbal input, and wherein information is provided as verbal input and the system converts the verbal input to digital form.

Claim 130 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, further comprising a device to request information which is one of (a) an avatar which is an animated image generated automatically by the system or (b) a simulated interviewer.

Claim 131 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, further comprising a device to accept verbal input, and wherein information is provided as verbal input and the system converts the verbal input to digital form.

Claim 132 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, further comprising a reporting system that at least one of (a) sends status messages to the user regarding the status of a particular order in the system, and (b) sends status messages to respective ones of the at least one provider.

Claim 133 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, further comprising a billing system that bills the user based on at least one of (a) number of providers that have been matched with respective ones of the at least one order placed by said user, and (b) number of orders placed during a period of time by said user.

Claim 134 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, wherein the user is a prospective employer and the at least one provider is one of a prospective employee or independent contractor.

Claim 135 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, wherein the user is a prospective patient and the at least one provider is one of a prospective doctor or dentist.

Claim 136 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, wherein the user is a human shopper and the at least one provider is a supplier of one of companionship, goods, or services.

Claim 137 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, wherein the initial degree of matching and the iteratively recomputed degree of matching between each order-provider pairing is computed without elimination of any order-provider pairings.

Claim 138 (cancelled).

Claim 139 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim120, wherein the correction factors are derived from at least one of interviewing respective ones of the at least one provider, testing of respective ones of the at least one provider, and reference checking regarding the provider information.

Claim 140 (Withdrawn): A system wherein a user places an order for at least one provider and a degree of matching between each order-provider pairing is computed, the system comprising:

a data storage device to receive and store user information including provider information that specifies provider criteria and order information that specifies the order criteria for that particular order;

at least one virtual provider that is created by matching provider information of a particular provider with order information of a particular order to create an informational pair;

a knowledge base which is stored in a data storage device which may be said data storage device, which is separate from the user information and separate from program code, and which contains information on which to base requests for information by the system to obtain the user information;

a scoring system for each said at least one virtual provider that compares the provider information of a particular provider and the order information of a particular order within each respective informational pair, and that determines a score reflecting a degree of matching for each respective informational pair; and

a correction system that automatically corrects the scores provided by the scoring system based on correction factors.

Claim 141 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, wherein the correction factors are derived from at least one of interviewing the provider, objective testing of the provider, and reference checking of the provider's information.

Claim 142 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, wherein the score is computed from a predetermined formula which includes at least one of user-specified criteria, user-specified weighting factors, and user-specified relative importance of respective criteria.

Claim 143 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, wherein the scoring system determines scores based in part on degree of clustering of keywords in information provided.

Claim 144 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 143, wherein the degree of clustering of keywords in information provided is at least one of (a) information provided by at least one of the user, the at least one provider, and a third party and (b) information contained in at least one of an application, a biography, and a resume submitted by the at least one provider.

Claim 145 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, wherein the scoring system considers the degree of matching through multiple steps including receiving and inputting user information and optionally requesting the user information.

Claim 146 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, further comprising a rescoring system that automatically corrects the scores based on correction factors.

Claim 147 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, further comprising a management system that tracks the at least one virtual provider through the multiple steps; and a sequencing system that specifies contents of each step, the contents at least including automatically-generated requests which are delivered to at least one of the user regarding the input of additional user information and to the provider regarding the input of additional provider information.

Claim 148 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 147, further comprising a timer that allocates a pre-determined time to complete at least one of the multiple steps.

Claim 149 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 147, wherein the system sends an alarm indicating that a predetermined time period has lapsed without requisite action.

Claim 150 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 149, wherein the alarm is sent to at least one individual recipient selected from the group consisting of the user, the provider, a third party, and an operator of the system, the alarm is classified as either a warning alarm or an urgent alarm, and the alarm is sent to the at least one individual recipient based on whether the respective at least one individual recipient has access to warning alarms or to urgent alarms.

Claim 151 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 147, wherein the contents of each step of the multiple steps at least includes instructions to at least one of (a) the user regarding the input of additional requester information and (b) the provider regarding the input of additional provider information, and wherein the sequencing system provides default content of a step.

Claim 152 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 151, wherein the default content is modified by the user.

Claim 153 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 151, further comprising a device to request information which is one of (a) an avatar which is an animated image generated automatically by the system or (b) a simulated interviewer.

Claim 154 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 153, further comprising a device to accept verbal input, and wherein information is provided as verbal input and the system converts the verbal input to digital form.

Claim 155 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, further comprising a device to request information which is one of (a) an avatar which is an animated image generated automatically by the system or (b) a simulated interviewer.

Claim 156 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, further comprising a device to accept verbal input, and wherein information is provided as verbal input and the system converts the verbal input to digital form.

Claim 157 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, further comprising a reporting system that at least one of (a) sends status messages to the user regarding the status of a particular order in the system, and (b) sends status messages to providers regarding the status of the virtual providers relating to respective providers in the system.

Claim 158 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, further comprising a billing system that bills the user based on at least one of (a) number of providers that have been matched with said user, (b) number of orders during a period of time from said user, and (c) the number of iterations.

Claim 159 (Cancelled).

Claim 160 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, wherein the requests for information result in the system obtaining at least one of the user information, the provider information, the order information, and refinements of the foregoing.

Claim 161 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, wherein the knowledge base contains at least two different categories of information including (a) basic information used by the system to construct initial questionnaires used to obtain input of initial user, order, and provider information; and (b) correction information used by the system to construct verification materials used for corrections when the system determines that verification of user-provided information is appropriate.

Claim 162 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 161, wherein the correction information includes rules by which verification materials including at least questions are selected for verification and correction of previously entered provider, order, and user information.

Claim 163 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 162, wherein the verification materials are constructed in a real time manner by the system question by question when the system determines that verification of user-provided information is appropriate.

Claim 164 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 163, wherein the verification materials include multiple-choice questions and a plurality of answers to each respective question.

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Claim 165 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, wherein the requests for information comprise at least one of questionnaires, application forms, interview scripts and other verification requests.

Claim 166 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, wherein the requests for information are organized in a plurality of levels so that the response to one or more requests for information in one level generates one or more requests for information in another level.

Claim 167 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 166, wherein the requests for information are organized into at least three levels.

Claim 168 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, wherein the system makes at least one request for information from at least one responder, receives at least one response from a respective responder, and determines which particular request for information was satisfied without the respective responder identifying themselves.

Claim 169 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 168, wherein the system includes a plurality of hidden codes to identify the respective responder.

Claim 170 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, further comprising a knowledge base system that updates the information contained in the knowledge base automatically so that the knowledge base is an adaptive knowledge base.

Claim 171 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 170, further comprising a reporting system that at least one of (a) sends status messages to the user regarding the status of a particular order in the system, and (b) sends status messages to providers regarding the status of the virtual providers relating to respective providers in the system, wherein the reporting system advises at least one of users and providers when the knowledge base is automatically updated, and wherein at least one of users and providers input additional information into the system in response to the advisories.

Claim 172 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, wherein the user is a prospective employer and the provider is one of a prospective employee or independent contractor.

Claim 173 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, wherein the user is a prospective patient and the provider is one of a prospective doctor or dentist.

Claim 174 (Withdrawn): The system of claim 140, wherein the user is a human shopper and the provider is a supplier of one of companionship, goods, or services.

Claim 175 (Cancelled).

Claim 176 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, wherein the knowledge base is substantially separate from said program code but may have supporting programs stored therein including at least one of components, sections, and sub-routines.

Claim 177 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 100, wherein said representations of attributes of at least one of the user, the at least one order, and the at least one provider respectively contain at least one attribute, and wherein each attribute is constructed independently from any other attribute using said facts and rules for iteratively convergent problem solving.

Claim 178 (Previously amended): The matching system of claim 103, wherein said requests for additional information continue until an acceptable result is obtained.